Legal Fees of Prasar Bharati

2683. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been six-time increase in the expenditure on fees paid to Government lawyers during the last two years by the Prasar Bharati;

(b) if so, how this expenditure remained around Rs.40 lakhs per year between 2004-07 and it is shooting up to Rs.4.5 crores during 2007-2009;

(c) the number of appearances by lawyers in courts during 2004-07 and 2007-09; and

(d) whether rupees one lakh per appearance was paid to a Government lawyer against an average fee of rupees five thousand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (DR. S. JAGATHRAKSHAKAN): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Policy norms for Cable operators

2684. SHRI T. T. V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new policy norms for new cable TV operators have been formulated; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) and (b) The Government has on 26.11.2009 announced the 'Guidelines for providing Headend-in-the-Sky (HITS) broadcasting service in India' which lay down the procedure and terms and conditions for grant of such permission. HITS opens up another mode of delivery of multichannel digital Television signals from a central facility via satellite to Cable operator any where in India. This therefore overcomes the limitations being faced by the Multi System Operators who were constrained to confine their operation only to a limited geographical area depending on the cable/fibre network. Since this technology brings down the cost of starting digital cable operations and makes signals accessible, it is expected to increase the spread of cable operations into areas yet uncovered. The existing cable operators will have the flexibility to switchover to signals from HITS service provider and upgrade their services from analog to digital. He will have the option to take only pay TV channels from the HITS provider and receive free-to-air channels directly from the broadcaster. However, the Cable TV Operators continue to be regulated as per the provisions of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and rules made thereunder. Salient features of the new policy on HITS Broadcasting service are as under:

(i) It provides for an enabling regulatory environment for HITS operators.

(ii) HITS services are allowed in both 4C-Band' and 'Ku-Band'.

(iii) HITS operators can uplink from Indian soil only and will have to install SMS and encryption system.

(iv) They are not permitted to provide signals directly to the subscribers. However, if HITS operator is also MSO/Cable Operator, he can do so through his distribution network.

(v) Total direct and indirect foreign investment including FDI is allowed upto 74%. Prior FIPB will be required if the FDI is beyond 49%.

(vi) The cross media holding restriction of 20% of total paid up equity has been prescribed for various segment of broadcasting services. These restrictions have been provided to avoid vertical & horizontal integration and to promote competition.

(vii) There is no restriction on number of permissions.

(viii) Existing permission holders of HITS will have to comply and migrate to new policy regime within three months failing which their permission shall be cancelled.

(ix) Sufficient provisions exist under the guidelines for monitoring of content, inspection and national security related issues etc. The detailed guidelines are available on the Ministry's website www.mib.nic.in.

Telecast of Doordarshan Channels

2685. SHRI N. R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cable and Direct to Home (DTH) operators are either not telecasting Doordarshan channels or while telecasting the quality of telecast is poor and unsatisfactory;

(b) if so, the details thereof and corrective steps taken in this regard;

(c) whether Government has taken any steps to regulate cable and DTH subscription rates in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Such instances have come to the notice of the Government. As per Section 8 of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Article 7.8 of the license agreement for DTH service, the cable operators and DTH service providers are mandated to carry compulsorily Parliament Channels and Doordarshan Channels in the manner specified and notified by the Government and Prasar Bharati respectively. Keeping in view the